

FINELLA IN FAIRYLAND



Demetra Kenneth Brown

Finella in Fairyland

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THE BUTTERFLIES ASSEMBLE TO CARRY
OFF FINELLA (page 3)

FINELLA IN FAIRYLAND

By Demetra Kenneth Brown

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
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Finella in Fairyland

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FINELLA IN FAIRYLAND

INELLA was a little girl with blue eyes and golden hair. She lived in a big house surrounded by a very large garden. In that garden grew many different flowers, and big trees, and hundreds of bushes. The birds and the butterflies came, too, in abundance, and taking it all in all, Finella's garden was the most beautiful to be seen anywhere around.

Finella had no brothers and sisters to

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play with, and what is still worse, she had no mother to teach her how to be sweet and good. That is why Finella was a naughty little girl. And that she was indeed ; for when her nurse let her play in the garden Finella chased the butterflies, and when she caught them she teased them and pulled off their wings. As for the flowers, she just plucked them out by the roots, and threw them around.

All this was very naughty, but she did not know it. It never occurred to her that it hurt the poor little butterflies ; and as for the flowers, why, it was silly to suppose that they even knew they were plucked.

And now comes the strange adventure

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which happened to Finella. One summer day, after she had pulled up lots of flowers and had teased many a butterfly by chasing it and making its little heart beat, Finella, tired out, sat down on the grass and presently went to sleep.

It was a funny sleep, though, for she could see in spite of her closed eyes, and she could hear, too.

And what do you suppose she saw?

Well, it was the most wonderful thing that ever befell Finella. She saw butterfly after butterfly fly down by her, and then disappear. As many as a hundred butterflies must have come.

Then she heard some one say in a tiny voice: —

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“ We are enough now. One! two!
three! and up she goes! ”

And with that Finella was raised from the ground. She actually was carried away by the butterflies, lying on their wings!

At first she thought of calling for help, but she could not speak; and then it *was* such a delightful ride.

Up they went — up and up, over the housetops and over the treetops; and off they sailed into the blue space of God. Oh, it was a marvellous ride, the most marvellous any little girl ever had!

The butterflies flew on and on until they came to the middle of a great wood.

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The trees were so tall and thick that they made it seem dark. There the butterflies stopped flying, and floated lower and lower till they reached the ground. They put Finella down very gently, and went and sat down themselves at the foot of one of the trees.

Finella wondered what was going to happen to her next; but, as I said before, she was asleep and could not ask, although she could see and hear.

In a little while things began to happen so fast that Finella forgot all about herself.

First came a rabbit hopping along, dressed in a gorgeous blue velvet man-

Finella in Fairyland

tle, and carrying a curly ram's horn in his hand.

"Is Finella here?" he called.

The butterflies pointed to the sleeping Finella.

The rabbit came and stood beside her.

"She has lovely golden hair," he said.
"It's a pity she's so bad."

With his little hand he touched her hair. Then he hopped up on a stump, and using the ram's horn he was carrying for a megaphone, he shouted, to the north and to the east, to the south and to the west:—

"Finella is here! Finella is here!"

The first to arrive was a crow, in com-

Finella in Fairyland

pany with a rooster with red wings. They both came and stood beside Finella.

“She is a pretty little girl,” said the crow.

“She is that, your honor,” answered the rooster. (He was a rooster who lived in Finella’s garden, and his women-folk gave Finella fresh eggs every morning.)

“But she is a naughty little girl. Once she threw a spool of cotton at me,” and from under his red wing he produced a spool of cotton.

The crow and the rooster sat down on either side of Finella, and the rabbit, through his megaphone, announced that the court musicians were arriving.

There was a great rustle of wings, and

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swarms of birds, big and small, flew down to the ground. They were no sooner seated than they all changed into musicians, with uniforms of the same color as their plumage had been — some gray, some red, some blue, and some orange and black. The flamingoes played the trombone, turkeys beat the bass-drum, and quail piped on the flute.

When the concert was over — and it was such a delightful concert as no little girl ever heard before (though you can go out into the woods and hear something like it, when all the birds are singing) — the rabbit announced loudly : —

“ *They are coming !* ”

Finella wondered who were coming —

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especially when the crow and the rooster stood up and shaded their eyes with their hands to see the better. It was hard for her to have to lie there perfectly still and not be able to see.

While everybody was busy watching, a small chipmunk, hand in hand with a wee squirrel, — both dressed in their best Sunday clothes, — crept up to Finella. The chipmunk kissed her, saying, “Pretty little girl!” and the tiny squirrel put a cracked nut in her hand.

Finella felt very grateful, for she loved nuts; and then to her delight the chipmunk whispered to her: —

“The fairies are coming!”

Finella in Fairyland

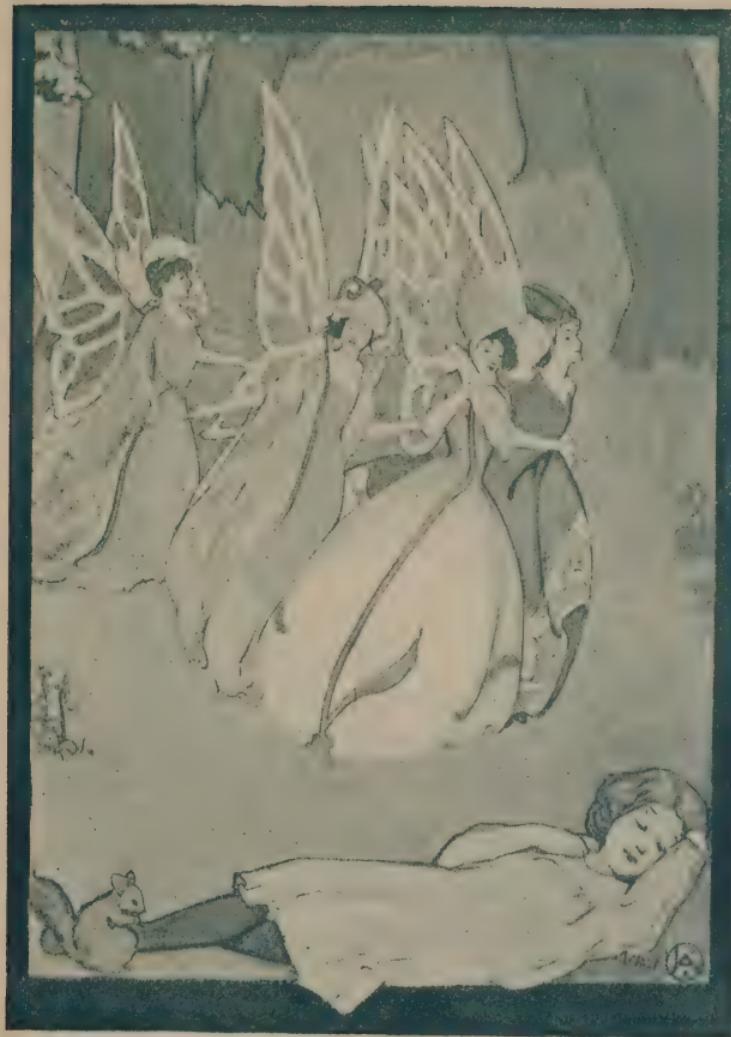
You may imagine how Finella felt. She had often read about fairies, but she had never seen them, and to think that now they were actually coming where she was!

Do you think she was surprised?

Not in the least; for after her wonderful ride on butterfly-back she could not be surprised at anything.

Now there was a rustling, such as ladies make with their long dresses, and the woods were filled with rows and rows of walking flowers — yes, nothing less than walking flowers.

They came and stood in rows around Finella, and in the twinkling of an eye they changed into fairies. They looked



THE FLOWERS TURN INTO FAIRIES

Finella in Fairyland

like lovely ladies, with starry eyes and spangles in their hair, and they were dressed in clothes made of the petals of flowers.

Then another wondrous thing was added to the many that had already happened.

In the place where the butterflies had clustered at the foot of the tree there was now a perfect bank of new fairies, and *their* clothes were made of cloth woven from the fluff on butterfly wings.

While Finella was trying to make out if her eyes really saw these new fairies, the rabbit put his horn to his lips and announced : —

“ The patients are coming ! ”

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From the direction in which the rabbit pointed, a bush was gliding forward, and Finella saw that it was the same bush which grew at the entrance of her garden. Yes, it was gliding forward as if it were on wheels. It moved very slowly, and when it was near, it stopped, — and changed into a hospital.

Each branch of the bush was a separate story, and on every floor there were rows and rows of tiny white beds, and in each bed lay a butterfly fairy, or a flower fairy. All of them were pale and seemed to be suffering.

The crow said “Ahem!” to clear his throat, and then continued solemnly :—
“ My friends of fairyland, we are here



THE HOSPITAL TREE

Finella in Fairyland

to-day on a painful duty. You see before you Finella, of the Beautiful Garden."

All the fairies and other wood-folk turned and fixed their starry eyes on Finella.

"I can't see her," said a sweet voice.

It was the brook running through the woods — the same brook which passed by the end of Finella's garden.

Thereupon two fairies raised up Finella so that the brook could see her, too. But you must not think that Finella felt as if some real person had touched her. Not at all! It was as if a light breeze blew by her; but up she was, and the squirrel and the chipmunk offered to make a seat for her. They put their

Finella in Fairyland

tiny paws together, and Finella sat on them.

The crow continued :—

“ You have before you Finella of the Beautiful Garden, where we all live. But is she kind and good to us, who bloom for her, and wave our wings for her, and sing for her—ahem!—as best we can?”

(The crow was a trifle embarrassed, for everybody knew he himself could not sing very well.)

“ No, no, she is not good to us! ” the fairies shouted (all except one), while the rooster flapped his wings so hard that he dropped his spool of cotton.

“ No, she is not good to us,” the crow repeated. “ Here in the hospital are the

Finella in Fairyland

fairies who have suffered at her hands. To-day is the first time in a hundred years that we are permitted to appear to a human being. We decided to appear to her, and bring her among us. What shall be done to her who has been so cruel to us?"

The rooster, who somehow looked like a big policeman, was the first to speak.

"To prison with her, your honor!" he said, and was about to take Finella by the collar, when the fairy who had not shouted with the others spoke up. She was quite tall for a fairy, and her clothes were pink petals, and Finella knew that she was the big rosebush which grew directly under her window.

"Please, your honor," said the rose

Finella in Fairyland

fairy, “remember that once on a hot, dry day Finella came out of her house with a glass of water in her hand, and she watered my roots,—and I *was* so thirsty! I won’t let her go to prison. If she goes, I will go too.”

“You good little fairy,” thought Finella, only she could not say it.

“That is one good act for Finella,” said the crow; but he pointed to all the suffering fairies in the hospital. “If she may not go to prison, we must punish her in some other way.”

Then he and the oldest fairies and the rooster put their heads together to discuss what the punishment should be. When they had come to a decision, the



I WILL GO TO PRISON, TOO!

Finella in Fairyland

rooster flapped his wings loudly for silence (though not a single fairy was making a noise), and the crow made this announcement : —

“ We have decided that since Finella does not love us, and treats us unkindly, we shall leave her garden and come back to the woods to live. Her garden shall no longer have any flowers in it. There will no longer be any butterflies hovering over it ; and the singing of birds will be heard no more. The big trees may stay, because she cannot hurt them. This is our decision.”

Finella had never known until this moment how much she loved the sight of the blossoming flowers and fluttering

Finella in Fairyland

butterflies, and the sweet singing of the birds. For the first time she realized that it was these gifts from God which made her garden so lovely. She began to cry with all her might, and this time she could cry aloud.

“Don’t cry, poor little girl,” whispered the chipmunk in her ear.

Then one of the musicians spoke,—you remember that the musicians were birds.

“Your honor,” he said. “Once in the winter when the earth was covered with snow and I was perishing from hunger, Finella was eating a nice piece of cake, and she threw some crumbs to me. I ate them, and they saved my life. In exchange

Finella in Fairyland

I ask that she should be given the right to defend herself and to tell us why she has been so cruel to our fairies.”

“Granted!” said the crow.

Thereupon two big rabbits in scarlet jackets, whom Finella had not seen before, came forward, side by side, making a chair with their hands. The rooster lifted Finella and placed her in it, and from there she could see very much better.

“Speak!” said the crow.

“I can’t,” said Finella, and to her amazement found that she could.

“Your honor, Mr. Crow,” she said in a tearful voice, addressing him politely as she had heard the others do, “nobody

Finella in Fairyland

ever told me not to hurt the things that grew in my garden. I did not know they were fairies."

One of the sick fairies raised her head from her pillow and said feebly: —

"Your honor, you must remember that little Finella has no mother to teach her to be good."

"That is true!" many voices cried; and the little chipmunk reached up and put another cracked nut into Finella's hand.

Finella felt braver when she saw that the fairies were inclined to be good to her.

"Mr. Crow, your honor," she continued, "I have seen our gardener thou-



FINELLA DEFENDS HERSELF

Finella in Fairyland

sands of times pluck the flowers to put in vases,— and I know that there are big collections of butterflies, because we have one.” She felt that she had a very good argument now.

“That is different,” exclaimed several fairies at once. “It is part of our business to be useful. It does not hurt us to be cut and put into vases, because then we give pleasure to people, in the day-time, and at night we tell stories to the children, when the grown-ups think they are asleep. As for the butterflies in collections, that is useful, too; and when our little bodies are in the collections, we fly away and find new ones. That is how it happens that every spring there

Finella in Fairyland

are just as many butterflies as there were the year before."

Finella hung her head. She knew that she had never made any one happy with the flowers and butterflies that came into her hands. And she felt very lonely at the thought of never seeing any of them again in her garden.

The little chipmunk pulled at her skirt, but she did not notice him, so he gave a big leap up on to her shoulder, and Finella heard him whispering in her ear:—

"Ask to be forgiven, and promise to be good."

As I told you before, Finella was naughty because she had not been taught

Finella in Fairyland

how to be good ; and now when the chipmunk was so friendly and the fairies seemed inclined to remember the few good things she had done, and also that she was motherless, her heart yearned to be good and useful. She was very sorry that there were so few good things she had done in her life, and she wished to be given a chance to be good, now that she knew more. For at heart Finella was a good little girl, just as all little girls and boys can be good, if they only make an effort to bring out the goodness which God has put into their hearts.

Finella held out her little arms and said : —

Finella in Fairyland

"Dear, good, kind fairies, if you will only forgive me this once and come back to my garden I promise never to harm *any* of you any more, and to do right all the time, if only you will help me."

At her words the fairies all began to cheer, because there is nothing they like better than to forgive and love little children.

"Will you come back with me?" Finella asked, with a catch in her voice, for she felt like crying again, only this time with joy.

"Indeed we will!" they shouted, and they trooped over and kissed her. Their kisses made Finella prettier than ever, only she did not know it.

Finella in Fairyland

Perhaps *you* do not know it, either, that when the fairies love little children and caress them, they grow up happy and pretty — even though they may think it is only a light breeze blowing through their hair.

After the fairies had all come and kissed Finella, and even the crow and the rooster had congratulated her, the butterfly fairies ranged themselves around Finella, and in an instant she was lifted off her feet and wafted up into the air again.

"Good-by, little friend!" she heard every one call to her, and waved her hand in return. And from her place high up in the air, she could see that every

Finella in Fairyland

fairy and bird was moving in her direction, too.

Up and up she flew, on the wings of the butterflies, till she was among the clouds and could no longer see the earth. But, to her surprise, she found that the clouds were only swarms of other fairies, with snow-white wings; and they were very busy, travelling all over the sky, from place to place, carrying water to those that needed it. They carried the water in their tiny palms, but there were so many thousands of them that, when they let the water fall, the people down on the earth all thought it was raining.

This time Finella could talk during her ride, and the butterfly fairies ex-



THE CLOUD FAIRIES

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plained to her that everything in the world was busy doing some sort of good to friends and neighbors.

"Now that we are friends, will you take me for other rides?" Finella asked.

The butterflies told her that they were only allowed to show themselves as fairies once in a hundred years; but that since she had seen them once, she could always talk to them, and that they would help her when she needed help.

The ride was now at an end, and they placed her in just the same spot where she had fallen asleep, and the next thing she knew her nurse was calling her.

Finella opened her eyes.

Finella in Fairyland

"Why, you must have been asleep," said the nurse.

Finella shook her head.

"I was with the fairies," she answered. "And now I am going to be a good little girl."

A tall rosebush near by nodded as if the wind had bent it over, but Finella knew better. Throwing her arms around the bush, she kissed the red rose which grew on it.

"You dear fairy bush!" she whispered.

And a wee chipmunk scampering by winked his merry eyes knowingly at her.

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